

2 September 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Ambassador Thompson's Cable No. 575*:
Possible U. S. Influence on Soviet Policy in
Current Phase

1. The Board agrees broadly with the Ambassador's analysis of the motives for the currently aggressive line of Soviet conduct toward the West, as set out more fully in Cable No. 568. It also agrees that the Soviets are probably not now committed to a prolonged further deterioration of their relations with the US, and that, once a new administration is installed, they are likely to review their present course in the light of the situation then prevailing. They may then decide to moderate their conduct in order to revive negotiations.

2. The Ambassador argues in Cable No. 575 that the US should try to influence Soviet policy in the latter direction. He believes that "it is to our advantage that the Soviets revert

* Attached

State Dept. review completed

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to an attempt to resolve our differences through negotiation and to achieve detente in our relations." He suggests a two-pronged approach for bringing this about: (a) to discourage persistence in the present hard line we should demonstrate to the Soviets in various ways that it is counterproductive for them (comment on his specific suggestions, Paras. 1-5 of the cable, are in Para. 4 below); (b) to encourage the desired reversion we should provide the "inducement" of giving "Khrushchev the possibility of maintaining that his former policy of achieving detente has some possibility of success."

3. There is no need to contest the point of departure in this argument, that is, that the path of negotiation and detente is generally in the U. S. interest. The actual and potential issues between the U. S. and the USSR, including the only temporarily adjourned issues of Berlin and Germany, are sufficiently dangerous to U. S. interests and to peace so that an atmosphere in which they can be handled without excessive risk will remain highly desirable. Moreover, we believe that

U. S. policy aims in general can be more effectively promoted under conditions of detente than under tension. In particular, it appears that the strains of detente are now more severe for the Bloc system than for the Western alliances.

4. We have the following comments on the Ambassador's suggestions in his Paras. 1-5 for convincing the Soviets that their present course is contrary to their interests:

Para. 1 - The firmness and unanimity of Western reaction to Soviet policies since May has on the whole been impressive, and no special extra demonstration seems necessary. However, the provocative GDR maneuvers in Berlin in the last few days provide a useful occasion for again documenting Western unity and firmness in Berlin.

Para. 2 - Our information on the current Sino-Soviet dispute indicates that the Soviets are well aware that China's attitude toward India has been damaging to the Communist cause. We believe that the Soviets will also find that their own conduct in recent months has in many ways harmed their interests. Their rocket threat

in the Cuban situation enabled the Latin American countries to combine with the U. S. in a counter-demonstration. More particularly, Soviet conduct on the Congo has alarmed many Afro-Asian countries. It would be very helpful if these countries could be persuaded at the forthcoming General Assembly to find some organized way of showing their displeasure with the obstructive and even viciously anti-UN stand of the USSR on the Congo question.

Para. 3 - We know that the Soviets have been extremely interested in promoting short-term government-guaranteed credits in Western Europe to finance key equipment purchases and have had some success. If the U. S. could persuade its NATO allies to put a stop on further credits of this kind, without fanfare or any public manifestation of collusion, the Soviets would doubtless recognize this development as a penalty for their recent behavior. Already, Italian-Soviet negotiations on such credits are reported to have broken down because the Italians resented the Soviets'

role in the recent Communist-organized anti-fascist riots.

Para. 4 - The Russians know that further increases in U. S. arms expenditures cannot now be undertaken until a new administration takes over, but it might be effective to peddle the line through indirect channels that, if present trends in Soviet-U. S. relations continue, both presidential candidates are determined to increase U. S. arms efforts substantially. However, we doubt the wisdom of indicating that we are considering supplying nuclear weapons to West Germany. If we wish the Soviets to remain interested in negotiating about Germany, we ought not to threaten a step as extreme as this which might seem to them to foreclose the possibility of negotiations. In our view, suggesting that we might give nuclear weapons to Germany would be far more provocative than a meeting of the Bundestag in Berlin, which the Ambassador believes might well trigger a Soviet separate peace treaty move. Our Berlin position is so vulnerable that we have every

interest in keeping the Soviets interested in negotiations about Germany, and we believe there should be no "forward" moves in that area now.

Para. 5 - Khrushchev probably does wish to keep open the possibility of reviving the Summit gambit. It might be useful to convey privately that the next President is likely to be interested in another Summit provided that the Soviets cooperate in again developing favorable auspices for such a meeting.

5. When we come to the other aspect of the Ambassador's approach, that is, to provide Khrushchev a positive "inducement" for moderating the current Soviet line, we have more difficulty. Ambassador Thompson seems to say that Khrushchev's aim before the Summit was merely to achieve detente as such. It would be easy to hold out the possibility of success for this. But we do not believe that detente in any genuine sense was his aim. For example, inseparably linked with pre-Summit Soviet maneuvers for detente were brazen

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threats and pressure to effect a humiliating defeat for the West on the Berlin issue. The promise of detente was intended to limit the risk of this maneuver and had it succeeded the "detente" might very well have been short-lived. We are not in a position to hold out promises of "success" for the kind of course the Soviets were pursuing until 1 May unless we are prepared for substantial retreats and concessions.

6. We believe that the U. S. posture during what is probably a short-term phase in Soviet policy should include the following elements:

(a) We should try, by political and propaganda action, especially in the UN, to make the present line of Soviet conduct as unrewarding as possible.

(b) We should give no sign of alarm or softening in the face of the present Soviet behavior, and try to persuade our allies and others to do likewise.

(c) At the same time, we should avoid provocative initiatives, especially in Germany, and we should probably not take any steps in the nuclear test field which would have the effect of closing out this last

area of negotiation which is still faintly alive. It is probably in our interest to avoid giving evidence to document the case which the Chinese are currently making in Bloc councils against a more moderate Soviet line.

(d) Finally, we should state, publicly and privately to the Soviets, that we are prepared to resume negotiations at any level for genuine solutions of tension-producing problems, provided that the right atmosphere is created and provided that the Soviets refrain from bullying tactics.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

ABBOT SMITH
Acting Chairman

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